
Sex and the Third Gender

Author's note: The opinions expressed herein came out of my and my friends' filthy minds. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of the entirety of the transgender community and their often stick-in-the-mud medical caregivers. If you don't like it, don't read it.

So this is my first column about one of the most tense and tricky subjects on earth, somewhere in there next to abortion and nuclear disarmament - transgender sexuality. We transgendered folk put in an awful lot of work to convince everyone - doctors, researchers, theoreticians, churches, parents, potential lovers, etc. - that being transgendered is not about sexual preference. It isn't the "end of the gay continuum", or anything like that. It has nothing to do with how we have sex, or want to have sex, or who we want to have it with. We're just now getting them to believe it...well, some of them, anyway.

Yet we do have sex; most of us anyway. Sure, some of us are too mired in body dysphoria and the pain of having the "wrong genitals" to cope with it, and some of us don't have understanding partners, or any partners at all. Yet most of the trannies (and I use that term affectionately) that I know do have sex lives, although our activities may not resemble those of most people. Yes, we fuck. Some of us fuck like bunnies, and we manage to do it while navigating a swamp of body discomfort and alienation, sometimes dragging along bewildered partners or would-be partners for the ride.

Whenever I come out to anyone, the first thing they do - or want to do - is stare at my crotch. Their eyes almost involuntarily flicker down to there, even if I'm sitting on the other side of a table and the only thing they can catch sight of is my meal. When I get up, they make sure to take a surreptitious look. They want to know: what do I have down there, and what do I do with it? Some will be blunt, with more or less obnoxiousness: "Hey, do you have a dick? Did you have the surgery?" Instead of being appalled or offended at their assumption that my genitals are their business, I prefer a different approach that nearly always gets rid of them: a mysterious smile and the comment, "You seem very interested in what's between my legs. I'll tell you about it, but you have to promise to get down on your knees and suck it, no matter what it is." Works like a charm, every time. So far no one's called my bluff.

When they see me with my wife, who's a male-to-female transsexual, their eyes go back and forth, back and forth, and I know what they're thinking. What do they have? What do they do with it? How the hell do they get it on? Does it look like anything I'd recognize? Once, after I'd read a rather graphic poem about our sexual practices at an erotic poetry reading, a guy sidled up to me and confessed he'd always wondered about it. I generally look 'em in the eye and smile as evilly as possible, saying silently to them, yeah, I know you're wondering, and you're not likely to find out, except that we're obviously having more fun than most people.

The hard truth of the matter is that those of us who have opted to change their bodies do have different anatomy from most single-gendered people, and they know it. Our anatomy may vary; some of us have full genital surgery, some partial, some none at all, and the reasons can range

from price to preference to not wanting to jeopardize one's orgasmic capacity. Transwomen may still have their original phalli (which they may or may not be able/willing to use in the normal way), or they may have their testicles removed, or an entire vaginoplasty, which may or may not have sensation. Transmen may have phalloplasties (which may or may not work), or they may have metaoidioplasties (which is sort of like phalloplasty lite; you get balls and a little tiny cock that still works), or, like me and most transmen in this country, they may be making do with their original genitals, with the modification of testosterone-enlarged clits. And some may hate having their hole touched, and some may love being banged there. We're a cussed and finicky bunch, we are. (But we're worth it.)

This smorgasbord of bits and pieces doesn't help the bewildered non-trans person who's staring at us across the room and....considering. Assuming you've gotten past the initial Eeek! reaction, your next thought after "What the hell do they do in bed?" might, just might, move on to: "Wow...what might they do in *my* bed?" If you're adventurous, you might try to picture it. Let me tell you now, the likelihood of getting the actuality right, especially if you're looking at your first tranny, is pretty low. But don't let that discourage you. The sacred androgyne is still within your realm of possibilities, but you'd better be open-minded, open to negotiation, and have a good imagination.

At a workshop I did at the Boston Bisexual conference four years ago in Boston, most of the people attending were men who were interested in picking up male-to-female transsexuals, and wanted to know how to go about it. No mention was made of female-to-males, and most people had no idea what to do with either of us. (Further columns will follow on how best to approach, pick up, and treat in bed both of our nonstandard genders; be patient.) Still, I've seen a growing awareness in our community that there are some people out there who find us interesting not in spite of, but because of what we are. My friend and former lover Heather calls her kind "transfrienders"; if we folks of nonstandard gender and anatomy get you hot under the collar, you just might be one.

As a pornographer, a lot of what I used to see in TG porn fell into two categories. Both dealt only with MTFs (male-to-females), and FTMs were, as usual, MIA. One was transvestite porn, with its ten basic subplots of forced feminization and mothers cross-dressing their sons. After spending a whole day reading one friend's extensive collection, I found my eyes (and my brain) glazing over. The other type is more visual; "chicks with dicks" do their thing with guys who apparently don't want to admit they're bisexual - they want to suck dick, and maybe even be fucked with it, but only if it's "girl dick", so they're not really queers. Right. I'm sorry, anyone who sleeps with me or my wife is bisexual by default. (They are also intelligent, have excellent taste, and sit down carefully several times a month.)

I resent the fact that there isn't enough hot, sexy porn written, photographed, and filmed that stars real (or could-be-real) transfolk with our real-life anatomical variety (and the variety of things that we are willing or unwilling to do with them) in ways that make us look strong, passionate, and like something worth drooling over. We need to do something about this, starting yesterday.

So I'll start with this: Recently, a bunch of us transfolk were sitting around in a living room (OK, it was mine), and we started listing all the interesting names we have for our pre- or non-op genitals. (Vocabulary: Because less than half of us get surgery, most of us are "pre-operative", meaning we haven't been able to get the funding together to have the lower chassis rebuilt, or

“non-operative”, meaning we choose not to risk iffy surgeries.) In order to deal with screwing around whilst using flesh bits we’d rather were quite different, we rename and reframe them by various little tricks - like using other terms for them.

Here’s our list. If it offends you, stop reading. You have been warned.

Transwomen’s penises: Clit On A Stick; Big Clit; The Decoration; Tootsie Roll (a la Lady Chablis); Inside-Out Cunt

Transwomen’s anal passages: Almostcunt; Earth Hole (as opposed to Water Hole); Cloaca (because, like birds and reptiles, one does everything with it); Temp Cunt

Transmen’s clits: Dicklet (or Diclit); Cocklet; Minicock; Hot Button

Transmen’s strap-on penises: Magic Dick (as opposed to girl dick or boy dick); Rubber Hose, Magic Wand (never goes soft!); Cock Mask; Detachable Penis

Transmen’s vaginas: Front Hole; Auxiliary Asshole; Inside-Out Cock; Fisting Hole; Cockpit; Boycunt; Glory Hole; Guy Pie; Bonus Round

Head spinning yet? Good. This is just to get you thinking of all the ways new vocabulary can rename and reframe anatomy and action. What we can name, we can tell stories about. What we can tell stories about, we can tell hot, gooey, heavy-breathing, squirmin’-in-your-chair stories about. And if we can do that, we can create a picture in people’s minds of what it might be like to do “this” with “that”.

There are a lot of sexual activities that I enjoy now that I never would have imagined I’d enjoy when I was, say, seventeen. Maybe that’s just about getting older, but I strongly suspect it has more to do with learning about new things. There are things I do now that I didn’t even have a clear mental picture of at seventeen, so I couldn’t fantasize about them. If we give people a fantasy - “you and that hot tranny with a seven rubber gloves, a tube of lube, an enema bag, and a couple of lurid red-and-black striped rubber sex toys, on the bathroom floor-”....well, you might start slipping yourself into that mental role, just to see if it fits. Maybe it won’t. Maybe it will and you’ll beat off to it for three nights straight.

It’s what I first learned about sex: context creates heat. Context makes you feel like you know what you’re doing, and you want to be doing it. Everything else we can do ourselves, with a little patience and a whole lot of lube.

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